

The Clarinet Through the Ages

Senior Honors Project

researched and performed by
Jessi Burns

Caroline A. Hartig, 12/03/01

Abstract:

SPC011
Thesis
L6
2489
Z4
2051
.B868

I chose to do this project to learn some of the most recognized literature for the clarinet as well as to increase my knowledge of the growth and development of this literature over the centuries. The preparation of these monumental works has moved my playing forward considerably in all performance aspects--tone, technique, line--all combining to complete my overall goal: the communication of my musical thoughts and ideas. The outcome of this project was a senior recital performed on clarinet featuring works spanning over four centuries and including repertoire by Bach, Mozart, Brahms, Debussy, and Stravinsky. It was designed to capture a landscape of the clarinet repertoire as it has evolved over the years. This recital, however, was merely the culmination of years of preparation and research, a combination of all the experiences I have gathered as a clarinetist over the past twelve years and as a human being throughout my life. My life experiences away from the clarinet have molded me so that I can interpret the music and apply the emotion necessary to portray the intentions of the composer. Playing the clarinet requires more than just technical knowledge; it requires emotion and understanding. After all, without the human involvement, there is no art.

This project was presented as a senior solo clarinet recital in collaboration with piano accompanist, Holly Hanauer. Five works were selected for the performance. These were:

- J.S. Bach - *Allemande* from *Suite II* for cello and *Presto* from *Sonata I in G minor* for violin (1720); transcribed and edited for clarinet by H. Voxman
- Mozart - *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra in A major*, KV 622, 1: *Allegro* (1791)
- Brahms - *Sonate Es-Dur* Op. 120, No. 2, 1: *Allegro Amabile* (1894)
- Debussy - *Premiere Rhapsodie* (1910)
- Stravinsky - *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo* (1919)

The selection of these works was a careful process, and the program represents some of the most standard and influential clarinet repertoire. The works chosen are representative of five distinct musical periods, therefore exhibiting the consistency of quality literature for the clarinet across centuries. Each piece was chosen for its own unique aspects as well as to create a program which demonstrates the versatility and contrasting styles for which clarinet is known.

The program begins with Bach, an unaccompanied violin/cello transcription. Bach, a staple of Classical music, demands versatility and an extensive understanding of the musical phrase. This piece was chosen to begin the recital as it is chronologically the oldest work and because it is a transcription. It is very common for performers to expand the boundaries of their repertoire. Playing transcriptions is one way to accomplish this. I chose to play this transcription because learning Bach was pivotal to

my growth as a performer as it required me to transcend the clarinet, to play as a violinist--to play the music, not just the instrument.

The works of Brahms and Debussy represent distinct time periods and levels of composition for the solo clarinetist. They have very unique demands concerning tone color, technique, and mood. Written for Richard Muhlfeld, *Sonate Es-Dur* is representative of the Romantic Period and is tonally and musically demanding. *Premiere Rhapsodie* was composed for the Paris Conservatory and is representative of Impressionism. The piece is very colorful and transparent, a direct correlation to the Impressionistic movement in the visual arts.

Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo was chosen as it is characteristic of yet another age of clarinet literature and is unaccompanied. This piece was pivotal in the evolvement of the clarinet as a solo, unaccompanied instrument and inspired other composers to write similar works. The influences of jazz and twentieth-century harmonies and rhythms are directly apparent within the three distinct pieces.

After the invention of the clarinet c.1690 by J.C. Denner, the first major piece of literature for clarinet was the Mozart *Concerto*. Inspired by Anton Stadler, this concerto has become the standard of the Classical concerto. This piece was chosen to end the recital for a reason of aesthetics rather than academics. From the standpoint of the audience, ending with Mozart provided an aesthetic ending as well as a sense of finality. Removing this piece from chronological order also created more diversity in the program between styles and genres.

Through the preparation and performance of this recital, I discovered a great deal about clarinet literature and its development. I learned music of various time periods and multiple ethnicities which provided insight into the time periods and the minds of the composers. Perhaps most importantly, this recital emphasized the clarinet as a vital solo instrument, written for by the elite composers and sought after for its unique timbre, technique, and versatility.

Project Advisor: *Caroline A. Harris, DMA. 12/3/21*

The Clarinet Through the Ages

Senior Honors Recital

performed by
Jessi Burns

with Holly Hanauer, piano

October 29th, 5:30PM
Pruis Hall

Works by:
Bach, Brahms, Debussy,
Stravinsky, Mozart

JESSI BURNS
clarinet
in a
SENIOR HONORS RECITAL
with
Holly Hanauer, piano

Allemande from Suite II for Cello Johann Sebastian Bach
Presto from Sonata I in G Minor for violin (1756-1791)
trans. H. Voxman

Sonata Es-Dur, Op. 120, No. 2 Johannes Brahms
I. Allegro Amabile (1833-1897)

Premiere Rhapsodie Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

... Intermission ...

Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo Igor Stravinsky
(1882-1971)

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
in A Major, KV 622 (1685-1750)
I. Allegro

Jessi Burns is a student of Caroline Hartig
and a member of Sigma Alpha Iota,
International Fraternity for women in the field of music.

PRUIS HALL
Monday, October 29, 2001
5:30 p.m.

Series LVI
Number 41

In keeping with copyright and artist agreements, use of recording
and photographic devices is not permitted by other than approved personnel.
We request your cooperation.
For performance information, call the School of Music Concert HotLine: (765)285-5878.

Program Notes
Compiled by Jessi Burns

J.S. Bach (1685-1750) --

Allemande from *Suite II* for cello and *Presto* from *Sonata I in G minor* for violin are unaccompanied transcriptions for the clarinet. Bach, as a staple of Classical music, demands versatility and an extensive understanding of the musical phrase. Many instrumentalists perform music by Bach because of the prominence of his music and his importance in the development of Classical music. Unfortunately, the clarinet was in its early stages of development when Bach composed much of his music and therefore was not written for as were instruments like violin or cello. It is interesting to ponder what Bach would have written for clarinet had the modern-day instrument been at his disposal.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) --

Sonate Es-Dur was composed in 1894 as the second in a set of sonatas, Op. 120. "In bringing the clarinet into the world of the duo-sonata Brahms effectively created a new chamber form, for there are no comparable works before them but many in the tradition he establishes. It is interesting to note Brahms's preference for the medium to that with strings, finding a better blend from the combination with piano than with strings..." (251).

Musgrave, Michael. The Music of Brahms. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985.

Sonate Es-Dur was dedicated to Richard Muhlfeld, a good friend of Brahms who premiered the sonatas with Brahms himself. These sonatas are representative of the Romantic Period and are tonally and musically demanding. "Often described as autumnal in character, the *Sonatas* stand as a remarkable summation of Brahms' craftsmanship, notable for the range of expression and compositional techniques contained within.... Although familiar formal schemes are employed -- sonata-allegro and sonata-rondo forms, theme and variations, etc. -- they are imbued with much subtlety and sophistication in matters of harmony, counterpoint and motivic development."

Nichols, William. "Audio Notes." The Clarinet 27.2 (2000): 19.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918) --

Premiere Rhapsodie was composed in December of 1909 and January of 1910 for the Paris Conservatory and is representative of Impressionism. The piece is very colorful and transparent, a direct correlation to the Impressionistic movement in the visual arts. It was first written with piano accompaniment and then arranged for orchestra 1910-1911. "Although written in the showy style suitable for a solo instrument, the work maintains a high artistic level; its melodic breadth, the graceful ease of the instrumental coloratura passages ... are equally noteworthy" (190-191).

Vallas, Leon. Claude Debussy: His Life and Works. Trans. Maire and Grace O'Brien. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) --

Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo was composed in 1919 and was pivotal in the evolution of the clarinet as a solo, unaccompanied instrument, inspiring other composers to write similar works. At the time the *Three Pieces* were written, jazz was a considerable influence on Stravinsky's music. *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo* is a jazz-inspired piece that was composed as a "written-out portrait" of improvisation.

Reinoso, Crystal Hearne. "Sources and Inspirations for Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo*." *The Clarinet* 23.3 (1996): 28-32.

"The first of the *Three Pieces* concentrates on the clarinet's chalumeau or low register, with its dark and vaguely ominous character. Stravinsky builds on this tone color with soft, even phrases composed of widely spaced intervals that subtly vary and extend selected fragments of the melody.

While the first piece is far from metrical in a conventional sense, with frequent changes in the time signature and breath marks that only take passing notice of the downbeat, the second piece eliminates barring altogether. Stravinsky employs the full range of the clarinet here, beginning with virtuosic passage work in a pattern of triplets that has the nature of a fanfare coming unglued. The middle section presents a sharp contrast in register, texture, and dynamics, as large leaps join droll grace notes in search of a Saturday morning cartoon.

The third piece was conceived for the clarinet's clarino or upper register, and within that bright but limited melodic range, it is all about momentum. In one of the few passages where the composer breaks into a regular rhythm, he tricks the eye by accenting every third beat, giving the strong sense of triple meter, but casting it in 2/4 time. The piece is a smile as well as a technical feat, with metrical changes in virtually every measure countered by more accents still, reducing the bar line to little more than a visual aid."

"*Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo*." Rico International. <http://www.ricoreeds.com/3pieces.html> (10 October 2001).

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791) --

The *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra in A Major*, KV 622 was composed in 1791 during the last months of Mozart's life, and a century after the invention of the clarinet c.1690 by J.C. Denner. Inspired by Anton Stadler, this concerto has become a standard of the Classical concerto. This concerto demonstrates "Mozart's full exploitation of the differences in tone color of the various registers of the instrument, [as] the range of the solo part frequently shifts among the low, middle, and high pitches of the clarinet" (21). "Mozart's utilization of the chalumeau register in the concerto is of particular interest, for he was among the first composers to discover the possibilities of the low notes on the instrument" (25).

Etheridge, David. Mozart's Clarinet Concerto: The Clarinetist's View. Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1983.

JESSI BURNS
clarinet
in a
SENIOR HONORS RECITAL
with
Holly Hanauer, piano

*Jessi,
Bravo on
a superb
Recital -*

Allemande from Suite II for Cello Johann Sebastian Bach
Presto from Sonata I in G Minor for violin (1756-1791)
trans. H. Voxman

Sonate Es-Dur, Op. 120, No. 2 Johannes Brahms
I. Allegro Amabile (1833-1897)

Premiere Rhapsodie Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)
... Intermission ...


Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo Igor Stravinsky
(1882-1971)

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
in A Major, KV 622 (1756-1791)
I. Allegro

from Dr. Caroline
Hartig
Associate Professor
of Music Performance
in Clarinet

*I am
very proud
of the musician
& clarinetist
you have become!!*

Jessi Burns is a student of Caroline Hartig
and a member of Sigma Alpha Iota,
International Fraternity for women in the field of music.

Dr. Hartig


PRUIS HALL
Monday, October 29, 2001
5:30 p.m.

Series LVI
Number 41

In keeping with copyright and artist agreements, use of recording
and photographic devices is not permitted by other than approved personnel.
We request your cooperation.
For performance information, call the School of Music Concert HotLine: (765)285-5878.

JESSI BURNS
clarinet
in a
SENIOR HONORS RECITAL
with
Holly Hanauer, piano

*congratulations
Jessi!
Well done.*

- Allemande from Suite II for Cello Johann Sebastian Bach
Presto from Sonata I in G Minor for violin (1756-1791)
trans. H. Voxman
- Sonata Es-Dur, Op. 120, No. 2 Johannes Brahms
I. Allegro Amabile (1833-1897)
- Premiere Rhapsodie Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)
- ... Intermission ...
- Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo Igor Stravinsky
(1882-1971)
- Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
in A Major, KV 622 (1685-1750)
I. Allegro

*from Dr. George
Wolfe*

*Professor of Music
Performane in
Saxophone*

George Wolfe

Jessi Burns is a student of Caroline Hartig
and a member of Sigma Alpha Iota,
International Fraternity for women in the field of music.

PRUIS HALL
Monday, October 29, 2001
5:30 p.m.

Series LVI
Number 41

In keeping with copyright and artist agreements, use of recording
and photographic devices is not permitted by other than approved personnel.
We request your cooperation.

For performance information, call the School of Music Concert HotLine: (765)285-6878.

JESSI BURNS
clarinet
in a
SENIOR HONORS RECITAL
with
Holly Hanauer, piano

Allemande from Suite II for Cello Johann Sebastian Bach
Presto from Sonata I in G Minor for violin (1756-1791)
trans. H. Voxman

Sonata Es-Dur, Op. 120, No. 2 Johannes Brahms
I. Allegro Amabile (1833-1897)

Premiere Rhapsodie Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

... Intermission ...

Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo Igor Stravinsky
(1882-1971)

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
in A Major, KV 622 (1756-1791)
I. Allegro

*Very expressive, Great
Very musical!
And very musical!
Preparation!
Congratulations Jessi
Scagnoli*

Jessi Burns is a student of Caroline Hanig
and a member of Sigma Alpha Iota,
International Fraternity for women in the field of music.

PRUIS HALL
Monday, October 29, 2001
5:30 p.m.

Series LVI
Number 41

In keeping with copyright and artist agreements, use of recording
and photographic devices is not permitted by other than approved personnel.
We request your cooperation.

For performance information, call the School of Music Concert HotLine: (765)285-5878.

from Dr. Joseph
Scagnoli
Associate Director,
School of Music
Professor of Music
Education
Director of Bands

Works Cited

- Etheridge, David. Mozart's Clarinet Concerto: The Clarinetist's View. Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1983.
- Musgrave, Michael. The Music of Brahms. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985.
- Nichols, William. "Audio Notes." The Clarinet 27.2 (2000): 19.
- Reinoso, Crystal Hearne. "Sources and Inspirations for Stravinsky's Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo." The Clarinet 23.3 (1996): 28-32.
- "Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo." Rico International. <http://www.ricoreeds.com/3pieces.html> (10 October 2001).
- Vallas, Leon. Claude Debussy: His Life and Works. Trans. Maire and Grace O'Brien. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to acknowledge and thank Holly Hanauer for accompanying my recital performance, for the many hours of rehearsals, and for constant support. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Caroline Hartig, Associate Professor of Music Performance in Clarinet, for her expertise and participation in preparing me for the recital and her guidance in creating this senior thesis.